

TRANSIT MASTER PLAN ADVISORY GROUP CHARGE

Draft for Discussion

Throughout development of the Transit Master Plan, the City intends to maintain transparency and open discussion with the community in order to ensure that riding transit is a convenient and desirable option for all Seattle residents, employees, and visitors. The City is committed to providing meaningful opportunities for public input as the plan is developed and implemented.

The 2010-2011 Transit Master Plan process will include a variety of outreach and engagement strategies that support inclusion, meaningful community participation, and ultimately an opportunity for diverse opinions and input to inform the plan. The Transit Master Plan Advisory Group (TMPAG) is one of those strategies. The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will specifically aim to engage underrepresented members of the community who do not normally participate, so that more voices can be heard.

Composition and Selection

The TMPAG is a group of 25 individuals who live and/or work in Seattle. Group members are local residents and leaders selected from a wide range of diverse transit stakeholders, including transportation advocates, community development and neighborhood-based organizations, the business community and major institutions, and people of diverse backgrounds. The TMPAG has been confirmed by the Mayor's Office and Council.

TMPAG members should have an ability to work within and across varying constituencies, representing a range of community interests. Group members should be open to diverse opinions and supportive of creating an environment for all views to be brought to the table, with a willingness to work collaboratively to find solutions that reflect the opinions of all members. In addition, they should have good history in managing difficult conversations and conflict. Members do not need to be transit experts, but they should be passionate about the importance of transit to the wellbeing of the whole community.

Purpose and Work Plan

The TMPAG is a work group with a term limited engagement, anticipated to last throughout the planning process for the Transit Master Plan, approximately 12 months. The group will be staffed by SDOT and will advise the project team through monthly meetings and regular communication. The purpose of the TMPAG is to promote discussion and information sharing among representatives of interest groups and to provide advice to the staff on activities related to developing the Transit Master Plan. Specifically, the group will advise the project team on key elements of the plan:

- Review the scope of overall plan elements;
- Work with the project team to develop various planning and/or service models for public review; and
- Assist in implementing broader community engagement strategies and work collaboratively with SDOT to provide outreach to key organizations and individuals.

TMPAG Role

- The TMPAG's role is to advise the project team on the development of the Transit Master Plan. Members will help staff articulate key problems, develop goals, and identify the steps the City should be taking to get to where it needs to go.
- The TMPAG will attempt to reach consensus on advice it provides to staff; however, consensus will not be required. When the group does not reach consensus, it will report different perspectives held on the issue and the rationale behind the perspectives.
- The TMPAG will not write the plan. It is vital for SDOT, the department that will lead implementation of this plan over the long run and that houses the City's transportation expertise, to be the lead in this effort. Implementation will be the responsibility of SDOT, and so SDOT has ultimate responsibility for the development of the plan.
- SDOT and the other departments and agencies that will together constitute the Inter-Agency Technical Advisory Team will help educate the TMPAG on transit issues, provide needed technical know-how, and address the pros and cons related to suggestions.
- Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, an independent consulting firm, has been hired to gather and analyze data, organize public meetings, and write a final product. The consultant will not only serve as a neutral party in writing the final plan, but will also provide the significant level of staff effort required to complete this endeavor.
- It is unlikely that every preference of the TMPAG will be reflected in the final plan, but that is the nature of an advisory group and of any planning effort that attempts to balance so many groups and interests. In the end, the City must make the ultimate choice about the best overall strategy.

Responsibilities of Members

- Members are asked to represent the points of view of their general interest area, not necessarily of the particular organization from which they come.
- Members are expected to serve as liaisons between the TMPAG and the groups they represent. In this capacity, members will be expected to communicate information about the project and community events, review opportunities, and provide other relevant information between the TMPAG and their group.
- Members will seek to share discussion time, encouraging everyone to participate fully.
- Members will seek to state their own concerns and interests clearly, listen carefully to others, and explore issues from all points of view before forming conclusions.
- Members are encouraged to express all points of view and perspectives on issues and alternatives and to seek to identify areas of agreement as well as reasons for different points of view in providing their advice to the project team.
- Designated members are expected to attend each meeting. In the event that a member cannot attend a meeting they may send a representative of their organization as an observer.
- The TMPAG may decide that it is of value to elect a chairperson or co-chairs. If so, the chair(s) will work with SDOT staff in preparing agendas for TMPAG meetings, shall be in charge of the floor, and may serve as the designated spokespeople for the process and its progress.